

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH MARCH 8, 2005

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School Committee held a meeting on this date at

7 p.m. in the Junior-Senior High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Bill Clay, and Paul McFadden. Superintendent Roy M. Seitsinger, Jr.; Director of Curriculum Philip D. Thornton; Director of Administration Robert V. Ross; and Director of Special Services Maureen DeCrescenzo were present. Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson arrived at 7:04 p.m. and Member William Munroe arrived at 7:06 p.m. Member Frank Maher and Student Representative Jaclyn Manchester were absent.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

OPEN FORUM – None

PRESENTATION – Student Member Report - Jaclyn Manchester was absent due to inclement weather.

Clerk Coutcher moved to move up agenda item VI. A. Contract

Compliance – Laidlaw Representative. Seconded by Member Clay. Voted 3 - 0 - 1. Member McFadden abstained.

Vice Chairperson Teri Cicero arrived at this time.

Laidlaw Bus Company representatives Scott Baton and Tony Murgio addressed questions from School Committee members on the subjects of Laidlaw's policy regarding their employees administering epi-pens, first aid kits on buses, and employees' first aid and CPR training. They indicated that under RIGL 16-21-22, bus drivers and bus monitors are not listed as being required to be trained in administering an epi-pen and they confirmed that all buses have first aid kits that are up to date and fully stocked.

Superintendent Seitsinger noted that at the direction of the School Committee he investigated two alternative bus companies, Dattco and First Student, to inquire if they had such policies and if they would come before the School Committee to address questions. Both companies declined to come before the committee and both indicated they had policies that did not allow for epi-pen administration.

Member Munroe arrived at this time.

Vice Chairperson Cicero expressed her concern that some at risk students are on a bus for as long as one hour and no one can help them should an emergency arise.

Member McFadden asked Laidlaw representatives if they would be willing to have their employees trained in first aid and CPR if the district paid part or none of the expense that would incur.

Mr. Murgo indicated that he would not be able to answer Member McFadden's question at this time and that he has been told by Laidlaw's corporate legal advisors that bus drivers and monitors do not fall under the Good Samaritan Law.

Member Cicero mentioned that up until this year our school nurses were providing bus drivers and bus monitors with epi-pen administration and CPR training.

Director of Administration Robert Ross explained that this was a contract year; Laidlaw's legal council advised them that because their drivers and monitors are not listed in RIGL 16-21-22 they would incur the liability should something go wrong.

A parent of two students that carry epi-pens demonstrated administering an epi-pen, noting it takes ten seconds to do so. She also noted that she was told by her children's bus driver that he/she will not go against Laidlaw's policy concerning administering epi-pens.

Mr. Murgo confirmed a memo was sent to Laidlaw bus drivers and bus monitors specifically instructing them not to administer an epi-pen.

Chair DeSack noted that the district cannot force Laidlaw to change their policy, and to date, the district has unsuccessfully tried to seek an alternative bus company willing to administer epi-pens, the district has unsuccessfully tried to hire its own bus monitors, and Senator Breene has filed a bill trying to change the RIGL 16-21-22 in order to help rectify this situation.

School nurse Christine McGrane suggested identifying which buses carry students with allergies to bees and allergies to unknown antigens and ensure they have monitors on them. She also suggested the committee request that Laidlaw enforce the no eating on the bus rule for all buses.

Chair DeSack noted the committee needs to look into what can be done and to work on changing RIGL 16-21-22. In the meantime, while awaiting the outcome of any change to the law, the committee will ask Laidlaw to enforce the no eating on the bus rule, the district will send home a letter to parents reminding them that eating on the bus is not allowed and why, and the committee examine options in order to get someone to ride the bus with a particular student that has an anaphylaxis medical issue and provide medical documentation

supporting their needs.

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Member Clay, (Legislative Liaison), noted that he will keep the committee and school nurse teachers abreast of information regarding RIGL 16-21-22 as it becomes available.

PRESENTATION - Ben Scungio Interview for Legal Counsel – Discussion: Members McFadden and Munroe questioned how Ben Scungio Interview for Legal Counsel came to be an agenda item.

Chair DeSack noted that over the past year there has been discussion among committee members that the district seeks potential alternative legal council and this was the first opportunity to put it on the agenda.

Attorney Ben Scungio introduced himself and his two colleagues, Attorney Cascione and Attorney Henneous. He explained he was one of five partners. He gave an overview of his law firm, noting other school districts his firm represents, he highlighted the firm's many years of experience, explained they had a broad base of expertise, and explained how they could help the school committee should they be hired as the district's legal council.

Committee members asked several probing and clarifying questions.

Chair DeSack thanked Attorney Scungio and his colleagues for coming and explained the committee will be interviewing other firms before making a final decision which will probably take several months. Chair DeSack requested the Superintendent provide correspondence at the March 22, 2005 meeting summarizing three potential alternative legal council firms he recommends the committee evaluate and add to the next agenda discussion on legal council. She also suggested committee members also make recommendations.

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA – Superintendent Seitsinger gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.

Member Clay requested item B. 1. a. Council 94 Job Fair Results be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Member McFadden requested item B. 1. b. Request from Director of Special Education Maureen DeCrescenzo to hire a four-hour teacher assistant for Wawaloam School to support a student because of behavioral and safety issues and item 3. Correspondence – (1) Letter to School Committee Members from a High School Parent Regarding Detention be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Chair DeSack requested items 3. Correspondence – (5) February 28, 2005 Memo to Chair DeSack from the Superintendent Regarding Mandates Reporting to School

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Committee, and (7) February 28, 2005 Fax from Nicholas Gorham to the Superintendent Regarding Opinion on Appropriations/Spending, be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Vice Chairperson Cicero moved to accept the consent agenda. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 - 0.

The following items were approved:

A. Minutes – Corrected Budget Sub Committee Minutes of February 3, 2005, Budget Sub Committee Minutes of February 10, 2005, Regular Minutes of February 15, 2005, Budget Sub Committee Minutes of February 18, 2005

1. Personnel Items

Appointments

Leaves of Absence

Resignation

Non-Renewals

Grievances

2. Bills – In the amount of \$ 232,896.51

3. Correspondence – (2) Priority List of Maintenance/Repair Plan from Director of Maintenance Bill Plumley, (3) Letter to the Superintendent from RI Department of Education Regarding the State of Emergency Day, (4) Memo to Policy Book Holders – Newly Adopted Policy # 2301 and Corrected Policy #8609, (6) February 28, 2005 Memo to School Committee from the Superintendent Regarding Teacher Non-Renewals, (8) Copy of Teaching Children Mathematics Article Published in National Journal, (9) Memo to School Committee, Dr. Seitsinger, and Mr. Ross Regarding United Health Care Informational Seminar

End of Consent Agenda

MONTHLY BUDGET PROJECTION 2004-2005 – Member Clay asked Director of Administration Robert Ross if the district was still in the black.

Mr. Ross replied affirmatively, noting a projected general fund balance of just under \$29,000. Mr. Ross confirmed the general fund balance as \$230,982.

Vice Chairperson Cicero moved to move up agenda item VI. C. Carpet Replacement Request – Room 4 – Wawaloam School. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 -0.

Director of Administration Robert Ross conveyed that three carpet replacement bids were obtained and all three bids reflect the product Powerbond carpeting. The Ruggieri Brothers., Inc. bid was the lowest.

Member Clay moved to accept the Ruggieri Brothers., Inc bid. Seconded by Member Munroe. Voted 6 – 0.

MONTHLY SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT – Superintendent Seitsinger explained there was a report submitted by the Policy sub-committee and that Member Maher will be submitting a report on behalf of the Early Dismissal 2005 Process and Procedure sub-committee once data is compiled.

Member Clay reported Member Maher indicated to him that he would like to join the policy committee.

Chair DeSack suggested letting Member Maher notify her of his desire to serve.

On behalf of the policy sub-committee, with regard to revising 9700 School Facility Use Policy, Member Clay requested consensus from School Committee members to observe facilities, and meet, and talk with district employees in order to see what is involved when a school facility is in use.

Chair DeSack asked if any member was opposed. No member opposed.

NEW BUSINESS – Building Control Quote from Siemens, Inc. – Director of Administration Robert Ross reviewed the building control quote from Siemens, Inc., recommending the district extend the existing contract through June 30, 2006. The amount of the increase over the 2005 contract is \$485.

Member Clay moved to extend the existing contract with Siemens, Inc. for 1-year. Seconded by Member Munroe. Voted. 6 – 0.

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Budget 2005-2006 Adoption – Member McFadden suggested a committee member make a motion and then the committee have a discussion.

Superintendent Seitsinger recommended the committee update the current position and then make a motion.

Member McFadden restated that he strongly recommended first having a motion on the floor, then a discussion, and if the motion does not carry – fine.

Chair DeSack asked if anyone wished to make a motion.

Member Clay moved to accept the Superintendent's proposed budget of an operational budget increase of 11.55%. Member Coutcher seconded.

Discussion: Superintendent Seitsinger recommended the following proposed cuts:

Sr. High - Guidance Counselor

Jr. High - Guidance Counselor

District - Full Day K Pilot

SDI/GASB34/Billing Clerk

Technology Staffing

Nurse Teacher

Resource Officer

Athletic Director

Legal Services

High School Common Planning Time

Student Data Information System

Full Day K-Program

Security System

Eliminate 3 Classroom Aides

Reduction of Library Aide Metcalf

Reduction of Elementary School Guidance

Sports

10% reduction in supplies

Member McFadden declared he was against any reduction in athletics.

Member Clay asked the Superintendent to detail what the sports reduction meant.

Superintendent Seitsinger explained the cut was not of a specific item, but for the athletic director to manage across the board.

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Member McFadden reiterated that he was against any reduction in athletics, as he feels athletics are very important.

Member Munroe agreed with Member McFadden.

Vice Chair Cicero responded to Mr. McFadden's statement by saying, "To get to your 5%, you need to eliminate something." Vice Chair Cicero then expressed she did not support the following proposed cuts:

Resource Officer

School Nurse

Elementary Guidance

Clerk Coutcher proposed a 13.93% operating increase and to add the following to the Superintendents recommendations:

Full Day K

Billing Clerk

Technology Staffing

Athletic Director

Three Classroom Aides

And to reduce the following:

Reduce Library Aide

Reduce Guidance

Reduce Speech

Superintendent Seitsinger explained one issue the district may face, should they choose to reduce the speech department, is that IEP decisions may change the need for speech services. This recommendation is based on the general slow decline of student population which can change.

Members asked Director of Special Services Maureen DeCrescenzo for statistics regarding numbers of speech teachers and numbers of students receiving services.

Mrs. DeCrescenzo mentioned she would be able to provide a list indicating each individual FTE and which students they service.

Vice Chair Cicero moved to amend the motion on the floor to eliminate the security system.

Member McFadden noted there can only be one amendment at a time.

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Chair DeSack noted there was no motion. Chair DeSack noted discussion to this point has been to keep in the budget the following items:

Sr. High - Literacy Coach

Senior Coordinator (both @ no cost to the district)

Social Science History

Science

Physical Education

Director of Student Affairs

Guidance Counselor

Jr. High - Guidance Counselor

Literacy Coach

District - Nurse Teacher

Resource Officer

Legal Services

High School Common Planning Time

Student Data Information

Security System

Sports

10% reduction in supplies

BMT

Consumer Science

Band Reduction

All Elementary Guidance

A total of \$25,924,288.00, at (12.8%) - with the Security System eliminated.

Chair DeSack asked if there was any further discussion.

Member Coutcher moved to amend the motion on the floor to 12.8% - \$25,924,288.00. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 4 – 2. Members Munroe and McFadden voted no.

Chair DeSack moved to vote on motion as amended which is to fund Sr. High - Literacy Coach, Senior Coordinator, Social Science History, Science, Physical Education, Director of Student Affairs, Guidance Counselor, Jr. High – Guidance, Literacy Coach, District – Nurse Teacher, Resource Officer, 10 % reduction in supplies, Legal Services, High School Common Planning Time, Student Data Information System, Sports, BMT, Consumer Science, Music Band Reduction, Elementary Guidance (agree to fund .6 elementary). Chair DeSack noted members need to discuss the reduction of elementary school guidance, as the district currently has .6 in its budget, the discussion is do the members want to fund that as a sufficiency to increase to 1.0?

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Superintendent Seitsinger reviewed the committee's consensus with regard to his recommendations as: On district line - Full Day K - out, Billing Clerk – totally out, Technology Staff - totally out, Athletic Director - totally out, Security System - totally out, all recommendation made by the Superintendent - totally out, except Elementary Guidance.

Mr. Ross noted the committee now had reached a new figure 12.99%, - \$25,969,090.00.

Member Clay communicated the following cuts - 3 Classroom Aides and .5 Library Aide, and to reduce the following positions - .4 - Psychologist and .4 Speech Therapist and noted this as the amendment to the motion on the floor.

After motioned, seconded and extensive discussion, Chair DeSack stated the amended motion will fund: Sr. High - Literacy Coach, Senior Coordinator, Social Science History, Science, Physical Education, Director of Student Affairs, Guidance Counselor, Jr. High – Guidance Counselor, Literacy Coach, District - .5 Nurse, Resource Officer, Legal Services, High School Common Planning Time, Student Data Information System, the Superintendents recommendations to fund Elementary Guidance as is now with no reduction, Additional Considerations - Sports Program, 10% Reduction in Supplies, (BMT, Consumer Science, Music Band – will not be out). A total of 12.99% -

\$25,969,090.00 with all the above mentioned - Voted: 4 -2. Member Munroe and McFadden voted no.

Motion carries.

Policy # 7603 – High School Graduation Requirements Adopted

Member McFadden moved to adopt Policy #7603 – High School Graduation Requirements. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0.

Request to Purchase (3) Three New Cafeteria Tables for Metcalf School - Member Munroe reviewed additional information he collected regarding the cost of purchasing three new cafeteria tables for Metcalf School. Member Munroe recommended purchasing the tables that included a life-time warranty and the perfect edge finish.

Chair DeSack moved to purchase (3) three tables with life-time warranty and the perfect edge finish at the estimated cost of \$3,500.00. Seconded by Member McFadden.

Voted 6 – 0.

Member Munroe will request the company provide the Superintendent with specifications regarding the tables.

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Chair DeSack reverted back to items pulled from the Consent Agenda – Member Clay asked that item 1. A. Job Fair Results be pulled from the consent agenda. After confirming with Director of Administration Robert Ross that the district would not be increasing FTE's he withdrew his request to pull the item.

Member McFadden requested item B. 1. b. Request from Director of Special Education Maureen DeCrescenzo to hire a four-hour teacher assistant for Wawaloam School to support a student because of behavioral and safety issues be pulled from the Consent Agenda. Member McFadden asked Director of Special Education Maureen DeCrescenzo if the district had already hired a person for this position.

Mrs. DeCrescenzo replied this was a new request and gave an overview of the student requiring the support of a teacher assistant, a projection for next year with regard to the requirement, and the approximate cost to fill this proposed position.

Member McFadden moved to approve, for this year, the request to hire a 4-hour teacher assistant. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero.

Member Clay questioned if the district can adequately provide support for this student in just 4-hours.

Mrs. DeCrescenzo explained the daily routine and how 4-hour would be sufficient.

Voted 6 – 0.

Member McFadden also requested item 3. Correspondence – (1) Letter to School Committee Members from a High School Parent Regarding Detention be pulled from the Consent Agenda - Member McFadden and Superintendent Seitsinger recommended requesting the policy committee review this matter.

Member Clay, (policy committee member), will contact Principal Boulé to check on the specifics of detention and notification to parents at the high school and bring the information back to committee members.

Chair DeSack requested items 3. Correspondence – (5) February 28, 2005 Memo to Chair DeSack from the Superintendent Regarding Mandates Reporting to School

Committee be pulled from the Consent Agenda – Chair DeSack gave a large quantity of written correspondence/mandates to Member Munroe, as evidence of the

communications and documentations shared by the administration regarding multiple mandates and regulations.

Chair DeSack requested item (7) February 28, 2005 Fax from Nicholas Gorham to the Superintendent Regarding Opinion on Appropriations/Spending, be pulled from the Consent Agenda – Chair DeSack noted the committee had discussed this issue at a previous meeting, as Member McFadden had requested the committee seek legal opinion on appropriations/spending. Counsel Gorham indicated that in his opinion the School Committee acted correctly regarding state aid.

Member McFadden noted that he had two questions at that previous meeting, his first question was answered by Attorney Gorham and he had nothing further to discuss regarding it, however his second question has not yet been addressed by Attorney Gorham.

Vice Chair Cicero moved to accept the items pulled from the consent agenda. Second by Member McFadden. Voted. 6 – 0.

Metcalf Intercom System Update – Superintendent Seitsinger reviewed three quotes received in reference to the Metcalf Intercom

System replacement and reiterated the motion made at the previous committee meeting to appropriate funds up to \$20,000.00 to be used to fund this project.

Member McFadden moved to approve the bid from Communication Systems, Inc. in the amount of \$5,975.00. Seconded by Member Clay. Voted 6 – 0.

REPORTS/COMMENTS –

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS – Deadline for motions to change the budget by more than \$10,000.00 – March 18, 2005, Space Needs Committee Meeting –

March 21, 2005, Advertise Public Hearing and motions to change the budget – March 25, 2005

Adjournment – Vice Chair Cicero moved to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK